1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Others, such as Casati (1891), Le Roy (1897), Burrows (1898), Johnston (1884, 1902, 1903, 1905, 1908), David (1904a, 1904b), Hutereau (1924), Powell-Cotton (1907), and Czekanowski (1922), to mention only a very few, give further details that are of interest but cover such a wide area as to make it impossible to gather any but the most superficial notion of a generalized "African Pygmy." When these sources provide us with factual observations, the facts are often not untainted with imagination. When they go beyond facts, additional "red herrings" are cast up, such as the silent trade between Pygmies and villagers, the lawlessness of Pygmy society, the Pygmies' complete lack of religion, and their ferocity and cannibalism. To add fuel to the fire, equally imaginative interpretations show them as having reciprocal and open trade relationships with the villagers, as living an ordered life according to their "natural instincts" for law and order, as following a monotheistic mystical religion, and as living a gentle and peaceful existence. According to this material, the "Pygmies" do have their own language and they do not, their way of life is totally different from that of their villager neighbors and it is a direct copy of villager life, they live in the heart of the forest and they live on the edge of the villages. These are just some of the contradictions that make it

[P. 150-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.150-C]

impossible to form any single coherent picture. 114 101 181 195

When Schmidt wrote "Die Stellung der Pygmäen-völker in der Entwicklungsgeschichte der Menschen" in 1910, all these contradictions were his source material. Pygmies existed, but they still had tails and were flying about from treetop to treetop, or else they were crawling on their bellies like snakes to enter their diminutive houses. Quatrefages (1887) and Le Roy (1897) had, at the end of the nineteenth century, attempted to draw together what was known about Pygmies all over the world, but Schmidt's study is the first work of real importance. He confines himself mostly to the African Pygmies and Bushmen and pursues two lines of thought: first, the relationship of both to Asiatic Pygmies; and second, the place of the Pygmy, both racially and anthropologically, in the evolution of the human race. Was the Pygmy the original inhabitant of the equatorial forests of Africa, or was he a degeneration of present Bantu stock—a throwback? These "red herrings" are still being diligently pursued, while the Pygmies and their social structure have gone unstudied by any anthropologist except with reference to these problems.

182 114 [15] [181] [184] *trice.*" Schebesta (1952, 42–43) also believes that the forest environment induces fear, suspicion, and guile, and limits the intellectual horizon of the Mbuti. Putnam is not entirely in agreement with this view. He regards Schebesta's archers as a particularly stagnant group, witnessed by the fact that they speak only one language, whereas nearly all other Mbuti speak several (Schebesta, as mentioned above, regards this factor as an indication of their purity), and also by their inadequate individual hunting technique, which, as Schebesta himself states (1933, 28; 1952, 100–101) contributes a bare third of their food and, he writes, renders them dependent on the villagers for plantation products. These remarks are not quite consistent with his statement that the exuberance of the vegetation assures these bands of gatherers a far more stable and sufficient diet than does the environment outside the forest (Schebesta, 1936b, 79; 1952, 42).

182 825 Putnam associates the lack of seasonal change with a general ignorance among the Pygmies of cyclical activities. For instance, the Mbuti, who observe every detail in their forest home, "are unaware that the aquatic larvae which they eat turn into mosquitoes, nor do they know that the caterpillar turns into a butterfly." [P.164-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 165-A] There is a profusion of wild flowers and orchids and many different kinds of vine. The Mbuti make great use of various species of *Ficus* for the manufacture of barkcloth, and certain vines are used to make string and hunting nets. There are also trees that give a sap which, if taken from one part of the tree, can be used as a cooking oil and, if taken from another, can be used either as an adhesive or as fuel for a torchlight. The Mbuti have a knowledge of effective medicines prepared from plants and roots, and also of poisons.

Schebesta (1952, 95–147), in response to persons who hold that the Mbuti have no culture of their own (e.g., Kerken, 1944), points to their remarkable adaptation to the forest environment. The level of their culture may not be high, but, even though primitive and "conservative," it is distinctly a forest culture and distinctly Pygmy. Their needs are few, and raw material is abundant. The striking thing is the minimal extent to which they utilize this material. Both Schebesta (1952, 98) and Putnam attribute this to the super-sufficiency of the environment itself which, making minimal demands, is accorded a minimal response. Mate-

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

From Schebesta (1952, 148–149), it would seem that archer camps are very much more variable both in size and duration. Although their time is fully occupied by the requirements of their hunting and gathering existence, the Mbuti never have any fear of shortage and consequently have no need to store. Theirs is a strictly diurnal economy. This fact, and the abundant way in which the forest satisfies their basic needs, not only directly affect their material culture (and indirectly their social structure) but also, to some extent, their social behavior and their religious thought.

The present report is not the place to pursue the question of the effect of environment on personality and behavior, a study more properly in the field of psychology than social anthropology. But it is worth emphasizing the probable importance of the environment in this respect, as it becomes especially significant when we study the religious life of the Mbuti.

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 235-C]

latter little is known in detail. Song is sometimes used when legends are told and is frequently mentioned in them. Dance and mime are even more closely connected. 53

The subject matter of Mbuti drama seems to correspond, as might be expected, with our classification of the subject matter of legends, but the former places greater emphasis on events of the day, particularly hunting. In default of detailed and accurate accounts of dramatic art and all attendant circumstances, the only generalization that seems permissible is the evident lack of interest in personal problems and a preoccupation with the maintenance of the relative status of the human (Mbuti), animal (villager), and supernatural worlds. 536 [81]

With reference to specialists in song and dance, as with other art forms, some individuals who have greater skill than others achieve a measure of renown for their skill. A mediocre hunter who is a good singer or dancer or legend teller is a far more important person than a moderate hunter who is none of these things. 555 53

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[P. 243-C]

gathering economy of the former from the adapted forest cultivation of the latter. Perhaps, above all, it distinguishes the values of the forest people from those of the villager invaders from the plains. The Mbuti adapt themselves to their environment; the villagers adapt the environment to their own way of life in so far as they can, compromising when they cannot. It is not difficult to see the possible psychological implications of this attitudinal difference and the profound difference in religious and social values that either rise from it or are strengthened by it. In the opposition between forest values and non-forest values we find the highest degree of opposition between the Mbuti and their villager neighbors.

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THE SOCIAL UNIT

P 184

At this elementary point in our survey of Mbuti society, we begin to find significant structural differences between one group and another. These differences are not related to linguistic differences. Moreover, we find that, with the possible exception of the archers described by Schebesta, the Mbuti are polyglots.

P 184 197

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

torily. Schebesta (1952, 42–43) involves himself in a blatant self-contradiction by saying at one point that the Pygmy culture is static and conservative because the forest provides him with an abundance from which he can satisfy all his needs. Elsewhere (1933, 28; 1952, 100–101) he writes that the Pygmy could not survive without the villager plantations. Both Patrick and Anne Putnam would reinforce the latter statement from their experience of the Epulu Mbuti, but only in so far as luxuries, such as plantains, have become necessities. Putnam asserts that the Pygmy could, when he wanted, support himself from the forest alone, and sometimes does. There can be little doubt about this latter point, as a hunting group may be 10 days away from the village. Transportation of adequate supplies of bananas over so great a distance would be impossible, particularly among a net-hunting community in which the women are required for hunting as well as gathering. The archer woman, for whom gathering is a full-time occupation, might just as well gather in the villager plantation as in the forest, particularly as, according to Schebesta (1952, 148), archer bands are always situated close to villages. More information is badly needed for an accurate assessment of exactly how fundamental this trade relationship is and how far it is a

[P 245-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p. 248-c]

and that Toré is applicable as a term for God.

As there is confusion, even among the Mbuti, on questions of religious terminology we can do little by pointing to this or that context. We must go a great deal further and try to discover something of the underlying system of values. In the light of such an inquiry we shall be able to assess better the significance behind the outward differences between the two groups; for instance, differences over the performance of ritual, differences in magical practice, and others. Here we cannot be content with a comparison of outward behavior, for we are dealing with a world of symbolism, and in that symbolic world we can fruitfully compare only the values that underlie the symbols. To do so leads us into the very much wider field of study that is broached in the succeeding and final two sections (pp. 249–272). By attempting to understand something of the Mbuti system of values we may not only hope to understand the significant differences between one type of hunting band and another, but also we may hope to get some idea of the real relationship between both kinds of band and their villager neighbors.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

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881
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[563]

they could quite well achieve in their own way. Such practical benefits as there may be do not demonstrate why the Mbuti should participate in the villager *nkumbi* any more than does the often alleged subordination of the Mbuti to villager authority and custom. The obvious rejection by the Mbuti of the significance attributed to the *nkumbi* by the villager and the relatively passive acceptance by the villager of this rejection serve only to emphasize the hiatus between the two people. They certainly do not demonstrate that the *nkumbi* serves to draw them closer together or to assert the authority of the villager over the Pygmy.

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This hiatus becomes even more evident when we consider the religious aspect of the *nkumbi*, as far as the Mbuti are concerned. It is a hiatus not only between two ways of living but between two ways of thinking, and it shows that we are dealing with two totally different sets of values. What the *nkumbi* achieves for the village boy bears little resemblance to what it achieves for the Pygmy. Ceremonial, ritual, and magic are ways of interpreting or influencing the supernatural in terms of the natural, and in his forest environment the Pygmy has relatively little need of either. It is not surprising then that his attitude to the ceremonial and ritual of the *nkumbi* differs from that of the villager. To

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
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"Initiation" in its broadest sense implies admission to some form of exclusive association or adoption of a certain system of values. The 1954 *nkumbi* cannot be regarded as initiation for the Mbuti under this definition. Although the circumstances were unusual, in that no villager boys were available to share the *nkumbi* with the Pygmy boys, it is precisely this factor that throws a new light on the more usual joint participation of both groups. If it is not "initiation" for the Mbuti, what is it?

We seem to be in the presence of an attempt to maintain or establish some kind of common ground between two neighboring peoples who can find no common values, yet who inevitably come into contact with each other. We have seen that the original point of contact was the use of the Mbuti, by warring villagers, as mercenary soldiers, spies, and scouts. While acting in this capacity the Mbuti were necessarily dependent on the villagers for food supplies. The Mbuti were also used by the villagers to hunt elephant and to bring in tusks for the ivory trade. But, with the cessation of tribal warfare and the government control of ivory, these relationships came to an end. The villager no longer had any use for the Pygmy, who in

[P. 254-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The function of these associations[1] is to regulate the relationship of these Mbuti with their forest world, to maintain the normality of that relationship and to restore it when disturbed, by rousing the God of the Forest from his sleep by song, echoed into the forest by means of the *molimo* horn in the case of formal meetings of the men's association. This god is the source of good and bad, and it is therefore sufficient to waken him. There is no formal supplication phrased in words as such.

The *molimo* and *elima* are distinct from village association with similar names and from whatever association it is into which the *nkumbi* initiates the villagers. Mbuti participation in the *nkumbi*, as in other village ceremonies, is part of the mutual attempt of two peoples forced together by historical reasons and present territorial juxtaposition to regularize their relationship, each to his own satisfaction. Trade is another such expression of their relationship; it is not the basis of it. Further, participation in the *nkumbi* involves an opposition between two sets of values (those of the villagers and those of the Mbuti taking part), as *nkumbi* initiation does not qualify the Mbuti for entry into his own religious association nor accord him any status in his own society. It enables him to move as an adult in villager society and gives the two peoples some common ground involving a superficially subordinate position for the Mbuti.

1, [Molimo and Elima associations --Analyst]

[p. 258-C]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.259-A]

any major crisis affecting the community as a whole. But, as well as these religious activities, both major economic activities, hunting and gathering, are also consecrated by special types of song. It is inconceivable that the Mbuti, who accompany every important event in their lives with song, should not consecrate the initiation of their boys in this same way. But for the *nkumbi* they have no music at all. As we have said, in 1954 the *molimo* horn was not heard, and no *molimo* songs were sung. I suggest that other initiations, in which the horn and songs are heard, are in connection with villager institutions to which the village boys are being initiated. The only conclusion we can draw is that for the Mbuti the *nkumbi* is not sufficiently significant in their forest life to merit consecration by forest song.

This is closely paralleled by the absence of forest music (songs of the *molimo* and *elima*, hunting-and-gathering songs) when the Mbuti are camped on the edge of a village. When they do, the Mbuti themselves behave as different people. In the forest they feel and observe a certain restraint. Their songs are related to and emphasize their supreme value—the forest. Their daily activities are dominated by the forest and the hunt and the need for close cooperation.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

In the final section we consider some legends collected by Anne Putnam among these same Mbuti, and observe in them more of the Mbuti attitude to the villagers and how they equate themselves, as humans, with the forest and with "good" animals, as opposed to the villagers who are associated with destructive animals and *satani*.

MBUTI VALUES AS SEEN IN LEGEND

In order to understand the Pygmy values more clearly, and to assess how far the Mbuti rejection of villager values is effectively valid and how far it is merely the psychological reaction of a subordinate people, it is worth considering a collection of nearly 200 legends noted down by Anne Putnam during the last years of her stay in the Ituri. These were all related by four of the more important hunters belonging to an Epulu net-hunting band. I myself have heard many of them told by these same hunters

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 269-C]

only for certain purposes, reveals at once a lack of interest in the past which is in accord with the apparent shortness of memory among these Pygmies, particularly noticeable when an investigator tries to construct some sort of genealogy. For me it heightens my suspicion of such genealogies given by a people who at times are only too willing to please by inventing totally fictitious names. The legends prove singularly unrewarding to anyone seeking some evidence of a lineage system. If they represent anything, they represent a people who are wholly absorbed in the present. If we accept this evidence, we can look for its consequences in the magico-religious life of the Mbuti as well as in other spheres.

Also with reference to the Mbuti magico-religious system, there is possibly some significance in the tendency to emphasize the natural order of events in the legends relating to social life. The ideal represented in the legend is the normal; consequently, these particular legends seem singularly unimaginative. They read like reports of actual occurrences. A certain amount of cleverness is normal, but an excess of it (when the term becomes best translated as "trickery") is abnormal and leads us, as we have seen, into

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

the world of the supernatural. The Pygmy is anxious to preserve the normal, the *status quo*. Although one could hardly determine this with any certainty from the legends alone, they certainly confirm the notion, which is of particular significanec with reference to Mbuti religious thought. We return briefly to this point below. 538 183

The second section dealing with social relations also reveals a center of interest on food, the importance of the food quest being implied repeatedly. Also emphasized is the importance of cooperation, not only between members of the same family, but between all members of the hunting band. These legends tell us that vice and virtue are scarcely understood as such, that the dominating quality is cleverness, with its converse, stupidity. But, as pointed out, this is a borderline world. Whereas cleverness may be of use to a Pygmy in his normal everyday life, it is really a quality associated with his dealings with the animal and supernatural worlds. In fact, one legend, not mentioned, quite distinctly tells us that in everyday life it is not good to be too clever, but better to be normal. An elephant hunter who loses his normality (by failing to accept food offered to him, and failing to join in the conversation) is 538 181. [476] [577] 538 181 183

[P. 269-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

538 promptly deserted as being unsafe company. So
• 181 we might gather that in daily life normality is
183 the ideal, and, when the supernatural (including animals, regarded as possessed of supernatural powers), is dealt with, cleverness is dominant.

538 From the second section of legends we can
888 finally glean some information from the treatment of old age. Two things emerge: first, old age is associated with extra cleverness, approaching trickery; second, we find Pygmy realism emerging again when old age is accompanied by disability. Either way, old age is a dangerous condition. In this particular band it is perhaps significant that the leaders of the group are not old, but are the active—the "great hunters."

538 Animals, like food, enter into the majority of
825 legends, and in some cases they seem to be regarded merely as animals. But more often the trickery of the animal is emphasized and, consequently, its association with the supernatural. In the third kind of legends, those dealing with the supernatural, we find animals in almost every one.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

538 almost every one. We also find villagers.
186 Throughout, the legends are interesting in their
825 revelation of the Pygmy attitude to his villager neighbors, but nowhere more so than when the villagers appear as elephants, profane elephants desecrating the sacred forest. At times the Pygmy regards the villager as stupid (in matters concerning everyday forest life), but at others the villager is associated with the excess of cleverness that we call "trickery," and then he belongs in either the animal or the supernatural worlds—certainly not in the Pygmy (human) world. This notion is one that we might usefully transpose from the legendary world to the world of reality. Just what is the Pygmy's relationship with the villager?

538 Here I wish to draw attention, at the risk of
• 181 appearing repetitious, to the constant opposi-
791 tion we find in the legends between the natural
792 (Pygmy) world and the supernatural, the normal (reasonable) world and the world of trickery. In his everyday life the Pygmy is also faced with an opposition between two real (in our sense) worlds—his forest world and the world of the villager. No two worlds could be more dissimilar. The villager is afraid of the forest; he believes it to be full of darkness and evil. One of the most striking points brought out by a study of these legends is the absence of any concept of evil (in the sense of conscious

[P. 270-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.270-C]

malevolence) in the forest world of the Pygmy. In his daily life the Pygmy regards the forest as a kind, good, protective home. At the risk of being accused of begging the question, I would like to say that other evidence (song, dance, and the practices of the Mbuti religious associations) also suggests that the Pygmy opposes these two worlds as we would oppose the sacred to the profane. Our understanding of his relationship with the villager tribes that surround him is, I think, considerably increased if we bear this fact in mind and realize its full implications.

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I deliberately use the term "supernatural" loosely in order to allow the fact to appear that very few of these legends deal with the supernatural as we generally understand the term. Situations that would, to us, be supernatural—such as villagers turning into elephants or even *satani* changing form at will and luring innocent Pygmies to their doom—to the Pygmy are, in a sense, natural. Like the difference between the sphere of magic and that of religion, and in a way corresponding to them, the dividing line is

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

plained. But there is a feeling, and I cannot say that it is more than that, that song has power. The song may have no words; it may be a mixture of meaningless sounds; but plainly it is esthetically satisfying to the Mbuti. These wordless songs are among the most powerful. When the father killed the bird, he killed the song, and he dropped down dead, completely dead, dead forever. In real life, also, song is powerful. Membership in the religious associations of the women and the men gives the Pygmy the right to take part in the singing of songs peculiar to those associations. In fact, it imposes a duty to do so. The songs are distinguished not by their content but by their musical style and the technique of performance. It is the *sound*, rather than the word content, that matters. These songs are sung, in their most powerful form, only on occasions of the greatest distress, such as sickness or death of one of the great hunters, or failure in the chase. These are departures from normality. It has been my contention from an analysis of the function of music among the Mbuti that song is believed to restore that normality.

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As well as several more obvious differences from villager values, such as emphasis by the

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[P. 271-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p. 272-A]

538 Mbuti on the food quest, their lack of interest
171 in the past, with a corresponding lack of inter-
• 181 est in lineage or tribal ancestry, and an opposi-
tion typical of forest people between the animal
and the human worlds, more significant differ-
[186] ences appear in the legends. One such difference
is, of course, the way the Mbuti tend to class
the villagers with the animals, in association
with the spiritual world, the world of trickery,
[178] in opposition to the human world. Then there
is the contrast between the Pygmy attitude to
the forest as the provider of all that is good as
well as bad, and the attitude of the villagers
who regard the forest as a place to be feared,
the abode of evil. This contrast is heightened by
the different magical and religious approaches
538 of the two people. The legends tend to confirm
182 the validity of my suggestion that the prime
791 function of the Mbuti magico-religious system
171 is to maintain normality in the relationship be-
tween the people and the forest. The villagers
seem more concerned with disorders and ab-
normalities and appear to have no such use of
song as that I have described for the Mbuti,
making greater use of witchcraft and sorcery.

538 To understand the meaning fully in each type
121 of legend, we need to know who told it, to
whom, with what accompanying mime, to what
effect, and under what circumstances. Given
such surrounding details, we could use legends
and allied arts to analyze that extremely diffi-

1: Turnbull E-4. 8 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

no villager boys present. But even more obvious, and ever manifesting itself, is the difference between the two people in their attitude to the forest. In the legends as told by the Mbuti we see something of the Mbuti attitude to the forest as the provider of all that is good and bad, as the source of the essentially good life of the Mbuti people. The forest is a place to be trusted (witness the *molimo* invocation to the God of the Forest) and loved. The villagers, on the other hand, fear the forest and people it with malevolent spirits. In their fear of the forest, there is necessarily an element of fear of the Mbuti, whom they recognize as its original inhabitants, as forest people. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Possoz (1954, 257) claims that the term "*Batwa*," derived from "*Batoa*," was originally applied by the Bantu-speaking tribes to the Pygmies, denoting that the latter were of older stock, closer to the ancestors and so worthy of veneration. The more recent term "*Batwa*," however, means "those in the course of disappearing." It would be difficult to prove or disprove such etymological deductions, but there is other evidence that the villager inhabitants of the Ituri Forest do not entirely lack respect for the Mbuti. There

[p. 274-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[P.275-A]

Z 186 829 is even the formalized manifestation of this respect mentioned by Joset (1947, 13) when the Bira villagers offer first fruits to the Mbuti.

P 186 • 181 Z 181 The Mbuti, on the other hand, when they are in the presence of the villagers, do not openly assert their own attitudes and values but, rather, reinforce those of the villagers, telling stories of the terrible things that can happen in the forest and of the difficult and dangerous life there. The Mbuti regard the villagers as uninitiated foreigners, alien if not actually hostile, to their own forest world. They therefore tolerate, it would appear, the fanciful beliefs of these outsiders, effectively preventing the villagers from entering the forest, either physically or spiritually. The villager is afraid to enter the forest, and his belief in the evil nature of the forest erects an effective spiritual barrier between himself and the Mbuti. The taboos and magical practices that he observes are in accord with his religious beliefs and his system of

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

values. To the Pygmy, however, these same practices are meaningless, as they do not conform with his own notions of the forest world. There is, consequently, a hiatus in the relationship between the two people or rather a hiatus between their relative systems of values and their structural relationship. For a proper understanding of the situation we need a great deal more data, the gathering of which should be one of the foremost tasks of any field-work project.

With reference to such a project, there appear to be two main needs. First, there is a need for detailed studies of representative hunting bands, both archer and net hunter, and of their relationships with their villager neighbors. Second, we need as large a number of such studies as possible for purposes of comparison, not only according to economic technique, but according to other possible systems of classification by structural principles or by degrees of affiliation to different villager tribes. The second need will be fulfilled simply by an extension of the first project. This initial project must necessarily cover not only a single band but other hunting bands with which it is associated through bonds of marriage or for any other reason that may become apparent. At the moment, the single hunting band appears to be the major effective political unit. Such single hunting bands are loosely associated only through

[P 295-8]

21 Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4 Mbuti

121 tainty, then I cite supporting evidence; otherwise it may be taken
[122] that generalization for all net-hunters is considered valid. In point of fact there seem to be few differences of structural interest.

[124] Enough work was done among archer bands to get some idea of the extent and nature of the structural differences to be expected between them and the net-hunters, but again I must emphasize the considered need for further studies, one of which should include a detailed study of an archer band over a similar period and with similar intensity, and another of which should tackle the Mbuti/Villager relationship from the village point of view. Finally, there is need for detailed studies of the various local village tribes, at which point those who are interested may begin to sort out which elements of the present Mbuti culture may be considered as original, and which as borrowed.

121 The over-all picture is one of a society where the lack of formal
105 structure is so evident that one wonders why there is not complete disintegration. There are not only no chiefs or councils of elders, but no ritual specialists, and no lineage system that in any way contributes directly to order and cohesion. There is no legal system, and no body of belief in supernatural sanctions. The secret begins to reveal itself when you look at the band one day, to see what it really *is*, and look at it the next day and find it is something else.

As suggested above, the constant state of flux that characterizes the Mbuti band may be in response to the attempts of the villager cultivators to assert a formal relationship with it. The lack of chiefs and the lack of priests and the lack of unilineal descent system certainly prevent the formation of political, ritual or domestic ties, and as stated elsewhere (Turnbull, 1956) the economic relationship is
[181] one of mutual convenience rather than of dependency. What emerges that seems to be of particular significance is the central theme of the forest, a theme that not only orders the hunting and gathering world of the Mbuti, but also divides them from the world of the villagers as if dividing the sacred from the profane.

121 If social flux is what prevents the formation of a relationship that
171 would necessarily involve the subordination of the Mbuti to the vil-
19 lagers, the central value of the forest is what maintains internal stability and cohesion, at the same time determining the relationship of opposition with the outside world. This opposition in fact creates a kind of voluntary indigenous system of apartheid, where two peoples live side by side, exploiting the same environment in totally dif-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 16]

CHAPTER 2

Orientation

THE PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

101 The Mbuti pygmies form the largest single group of pygmy hunters
144 and gatherers in Africa, and are probably also the purest in both the biological and cultural senses. Throughout the equatorial rain forest other similar groups exist, but while some of them (notably in the Gabon and in the Ubangi area) appear to be comparable with the Mbuti, the majority, like the Twa and the Tswa of the Kivu and central Congo districts (see Map 3) have at one time or another intermarried with Negro tribes of cultivators, losing many of the true pygmy physical characteristics and at the same time losing a great deal of their original hunting and gathering culture.

• 181 Far more important, from the structural point of view, is the altered relationship between all these pygmoids and the world they live in, for as we shall see, the structure of Mbuti society pivots
* [179] around a powerful forest-oriented system of values. This value system to a large extent overrides economic considerations in determining the relationship between the Mbuti and their village neighbors, whereas among the pygmoids the economic factor appears to be dominant, and the consequent dependency of the pygmoids upon the villagers in other respects is also greater.

* 177 This is in no way to say that the structure to be found among the
178 Mbuti is representative of an original pygmy hunting and gathering structure; in fact probably far from it, for the repercussions of the invasion of the forest by the village cultivators have been enormous. But the response of the Mbuti, for whatever reason, has been different from that of the Twa and the Tswa and it is of much greater structural interest and significance, incidentally throwing light on the whole process of acculturation. At the same time, however, the peculiar structural development of the Mbuti does enable us to observe a

[see page 318 -- Analysis]

2: Turnbull B-5 (1951-1958) 1265 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa PO1

much faith in a charm against a witch's power, if such power exists; their own remedy is retreat to the forest, where there are no witches. They do not believe in the existence of malevolent *keti*, or spirits, as do the villagers.

In the realm of curative magic, then, the villager has nothing to offer that the Mbuti needs, and has no means of utilizing magic or exclusive village knowledge of magical techniques to control the Mbuti.

WITCHCRAFT

If it were not for their own misconception of village witchcraft, the Mbuti would be at no disadvantage through their own lack of it. As it is, however, they tend to confuse witchcraft and sorcery, and consequently find themselves dealing with a phenomenon totally outside their forest-world experience—conscious malevolence.

Their confusion is visible in their constant usage of the terms associated with sorcery, even when only witchcraft is implied. The forest hunters are aware of the theoretical difference, but simply do not believe in the existence of witchcraft substance. They are unwilling enough to believe in malevolent supernatural powers, but events combine to persuade them to belief.

Unlike magic, which applies to natural phenomena, witchcraft and sorcery deal necessarily with the supernatural, and create their own need for protection. But whereas the villagers, in their acceptance of the theory of witchcraft substance, can happily accept a fetish bundle as adequate protection, the Mbuti, seeing the whole thing as malevolent sorcery, cannot believe that a bundle of sticks and bones is going to afford much help. Looking at witchcraft—and sorcery—as something belonging essentially to the village world, however, they do have recourse in flight to the forest, where, in their experience, these supernatural powers cannot easily reach. In the village world they can find no protection, and can only hope for an end to the underlying hostility.

Thus witchcraft, which among the villagers is essentially a mechanism for social control, being a concept employed usefully to bring to light hidden sources of dispute and to publicly shame troublemakers, inadvertently gives the villagers a weapon against the Mbuti, while at the same time it drives the Mbuti both literally back into

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

important, for both net-hunters and archers, that a hunter should know well the habits of those who are near him on the hunt. Insofar as children learn to hunt mostly but by no means entirely from their fathers, it is obvious that brothers are likely to be most familiar with each other's hunting techniques, and will thus make the best hunting partners. But against this work many other practices, such as communal hunting games for all children, regardless of relationship, and the frequency of adoption, and of assimilation of adult strangers into the band.

If we cannot find any explanation for the flux and instability that seem characteristic of the band in terms of kinship or economy, or indeed in terms of any aspect of forest life, both become immediately meaningful in considering the relationship between the band and the village. Without going into this in detail at the moment, it must already be evident that the system, or lack of it, must be unhappily confusing for the patrilineal patrilocal villagers, who claim both lineal and territorial rights over Mbuti bands. For as we have seen, a band does not maintain any kind of unilineal integrity even within a single camp, let alone from one camp to the next. And owing to the wider flux, caused by the constant process of fission and fusion, the band has merely territorial reference and cannot be said to apply to specific individuals or lineages. A lineage such as Cephu's may be in the Epulu territory one month and in Ebiani the next. So with every lineage, as with every individual, there is an infinity of territories to which he may move if it pleases him, and the system, such as it is, encourages such movement to the point that no villager can ever be sure of what Mbuti lineages are hunting in "his" territory. Let us leave it for the moment, then, that at least one possible structural result of the combination of the nonlineal nature of the band and its tendency to flux is the counteraction of the village system, rendering the villagers' lineal and territorial claims impractical of assertion.

THE FAMILY

It would of course, be ridiculous to deny that there is any system of kinship, but it is certain that the kinship system does not have the same importance as a focal point of social control as it may in other African societies. To my mind this is undeniably linked to the ad hoc nature of the society, with its almost complete lack of concern for the past, as for the future. This is something we shall discover in

2: Turnbull B-5 (1951-1960) 1985 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

the economic and political life, and even in the religious life of the Mbuti, who are supremely concerned with the present.

The effective kinship terminology at once reflects the situation, which only becomes confused when any attempt is made to relate the terms to their usage in village society. It distinguishes generations rather than kin, and cuts indiscriminately across actual kinship boundaries. Through its effective organization of the band into age groups, it emphasizes the economic basis of band unity rather than any kinship bonds. The only terms in general usage in the Epulu region, and among the Mbuti bands to the east-west extremes of the Bira-speaking net-hunting territory, are as follows:

Grandparent:	*tata*	for address and reference
Father:	*epa*	for address and reference
Mother:	*ema*	for address and reference
Sibling:	*apua'i* or *moko*	for address and reference

(*apua'i* is used rather than *moko*, though its connotation is one of close friendship)

Child:	*miki*	for address or reference

Except at the parental level, there is generally no sex differentiation. At times it seems that *tatá* is used for grandmother, *tata* for grandfather. Similarly, *amua'i* is a possible variant to denote a female sibling. But as frequently, if not more so, and more consistently, I found *tata* and *apua'i* used for either sex. Differentiation is also made, if necessary, by adding the terms used for boy or girl—*moko* or *kali*, respectively. Thus *miki a moko* is a boy child; *miki a kali* is a girl child. There is also a way of distinguishing the younger from the older: *vomia* is older, *motoa* is younger, but the Mbuti generally only couple these designations to kinship terms in direct imitation of the village usage and only in village contexts.

Bira terminology, with minor dialectal variations, is similar to the above, but with the addition of terms such as *noko* for mother's brother; *kola* for father's sister; *om-epa* and *mot-epa* for the older and younger brother of the father; and *om-ema* and *mot-ema* for the older and younger sister of the mother. The Bira call an older brother *homiomá*, an older sister *alwemá*, and a younger brother or sister simply *moto*. The Mbuti normally refer to their father's sister simply as *ema* ("mother"), but if trying to refer to her for the benefit of

2: Turnbull E-5 (1961-1966) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

same age group, and on maturity and marriage the old nuclear family sometimes reaffirms itself as an extended family. The old parents may build a separate hut adjoining the huts of their married children, or even live in the hut of one of their offspring, who will probably build an extension for the purpose. But during adolescence children may well be separated from their biological parents by both time and space. Similarly in adulthood there is not infrequently friction between brothers, sometimes leading to fission within the band.

Finally, in connection with the importance of age as a structural principle, it should be pointed out that the lack of a unilineal system of descent among the Mbuti is associated with a lack of any developed form of ancestor worship. Practices associated with death will be dealt with more fully later; here it need only be said that far from remembering the dead by word or action, the main objective seems to be to forget them. They may never be referred to again, particularly by name, and there is no memorial maintained in their honor, no marked or tended grave site. However, they are by the same token not feared, and insofar as they are remembered at all they are remembered with affection. The concern of the Mbuti is almost exclusively with the present. This is not to say that they deny a past or a future, either in this life or the next; it is merely to say that they believe that by a correct fulfillment of the present, the past and the future will take care of themselves. This correlates with the age-group system and with the dominance and prestige of the two middle groups, the youths and the hunters, for in their hands lies the fulfillment of the present.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.246]

CHAPTER 14

Religion

SUPERNATURAL BELIEFS

In dealing with religion, Schebesta on occasion clearly states whether he is referring to the Sua, who are primarily net-hunters, or to the Efe, who are archers, so we are able to make some use of his data. However, religious belief among the Epulu net-hunting Mbuti does not coincide in detail with his account of Sua religion. Even among the very archer Mbuti where Schebesta worked I found the widest possible divergence of opinion, to the point of complete contradiction by one band of the stated beliefs of the other. The only systematic unity into which these allegedly Mbuti concepts fitted was that of the Lesé magico-religious system. However, Schebesta plainly saw throughout that though there were significant differences of opinion, there was also a subtle and powerful unity in trying to discover this unity. He was unfortunately hampered by his overwhelming desire to present a picture of a system applicable to all Mbuti.

Among the net-hunters, as among the archers, the dual use of magico-religious terms by the Mbuti, to refer both to village and to Mbuti practice and belief sometimes leads to an appearance of an Mbuti system somewhat akin to that of the villagers. However, ignoring the actual terminology—which is further confused by the proliferation of tribal languages in the Epulu region, in discussing concepts concerning life and death, the nature of the afterworld and so forth—there is not only difference of opinion from one net-hunting band to the next but even within any one band or any one family.

This should be no particular cause for surprise for, being a practical people whose physical existence is determined, in detail, by day-to-day context, they are far more concerned with the present than they are with the past or the future. With regard to the future, be it in this life or the next, they eschew speculation on the grounds that not

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

having been there they do not know what it is like, and not knowing what it is like they cannot predict what their behavior will be. They say that to try and go into the future is to "walk blindly," and their response to villagers, missionaries or any who claim a knowledge of afterlife is to say, "How do you know. Have you died and been there?" They liken such discussion to the talk of a hunter who suggests hunting in a certain place without ever having been there, or a woman who goes off in a set direction to gather a certain kind of mushroom without having seen them growing in any particular place there. These are people who act "emptily," or whose heads are loose and not properly attached to the body.

However, this disclaimer to absolute knowledge of the nature of the future or of afterlife is in itself a characteristic that I found to be universal among the Mbuti, at least within my own experience. This did not prevent individuals from having ideas about the unknown, but as already indicated, such speculation was considered as fruitless, and took the form of legend and was listened to with interest, and often with amusement. Such speculations, whether spontaneous or in the form of established legends, do not reveal any consistency in detail, which appears to be a matter of individual imagination, but there are broad areas of belief that seem widespread among both archers and net-hunters.

There is a belief in a power greater than the Mbuti themselves and not of the natural order of the world they see and know around them. Insofar as this is stated to be a belief, and not knowledge, it may be considered a spiritual power, the spirit being a level of existence that the Mbuti do not claim to understand but which they see as necessarily existing in order to explain the nature of the world's unknowns. Again the terminology is hopelessly confused, the Epulu Mbuti using, in one instance, no less than five terms interchangeably—*pepo, keti, boru, roho, satani.* These terms are drawn from Lesé, Bira, Ndaka and Ngwana, among which tribes of villagers they are also to some extent interchanged, each change bringing a different shade of meaning. For the Mbuti they do not indicate clearly differentiated elements that make up the physical and spiritual being of man, but rather indicate this basic belief that man himself is in part spiritual and that his life derives not from the flesh but from some other source. All five terms are used equally to denote this personal force. But each one is also used to denote different aspects of that force, and the Mbuti usage again in no way coincides with that of the villagers,

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

This was not an isolated instance, though such dancing and singing are generally confined to youths and younger married people. The erotic aspect of the relationship between forest and Mbuti is also seen in the very clear individual preferences for certain types of place in which it is found good to the *roho* to have sexual intercourse, such as by a stream, or in dark shade, or in a patch of sunlight or moonlight, or during the hunt, but in the forest rather than in the hut.

The perennial certainty of economic sufficiency, the general lack of crisis in their lives, all lead the Mbuti to the conviction that the forest, regarded as the source of *pepo* and of their whole existence, is benevolent, and that the natural course of life is good. The absence of magic is not necessarily an indication of technological mastery; in this instance it is simply an indication of the normal absence of crisis. We indicated that such magic as existed was not without its spiritual aspects, and might possibly be better classified as religion. For instance the use of vine and wooden charms on an infant to convey the strength of the forest to the child is not thought to achieve its end directly, by physical transference alone. Physical contact with these materials is considered strengthening, and certainly the juice of the vine in which infants are bathed is thought to have strengthening properties, but these things are also considered "pleasing to the forest" (*babongisa ndura*). This phrase constantly recurs, and shows the belief in the awareness by the forest of its "children" and their needs. Such acts and many others, by physically relating the individual to the forest, are believed to create an added awareness of the Mbuti by the forest. It is not only the strength of the forest that is wanted, but its affection.

THE POWER OF SOUND

Birth is attended with an undemonstrative concern to establish this relationship between the forest and the individual, and it is reinforced at puberty by what might also be considered in some respects as magic, but which is more essentially religious, and that is song. The mere attachment of a vine to the wrist or around the waist requires that amount of effort and no more. Song requires continued effort, is more direct and personal, and consequently more powerful—its goal is identical. Song above all else is believed to attract the attention of the forest, and to please it. "Sound is very strong indeed; noise is bad, but song is good" (*S'uti mota ningo'e, akami sinano'e;*

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 | FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Death songs are normally sung at the death of an adult, male or female, during the ensuing festival (*molimo*), but some of them may be sung at other times of crisis that threaten life, notably sickness or poor hunting. Certain songs seem to be reserved for actual death, but my impression is that this is a matter of personal attitude, for there are other ways in which a distinction is more clearly made between what are called the lesser and the greater *molimo*, the latter being the festival concerned solely with death.

To the same extent that the *elima* songs are of rather more importance to women than men, so are *molimo* songs considered more the concern of men. There is, however, no absolute exclusion. On the contrary, the male youths are an integral part of the *elima* festival, which celebrates their puberty just as much as it celebrates that of the girls, and although the actual festival is occasioned by the physical maturation of the girls, who are then taught the *elima* songs, the male youths are needed to sing the chorus to certain of those songs. In the *molimo*, at one point, the roles of the sexes are reversed (as in *ekokomea*), with the women taking over the men's songs, the men sitting back and listening, like women.

An examination of Mbuti song form not only reveals areas of concern to the Mbuti, such as their food-getting activities, life and death, but it also reveals the concern of the Mbuti for cooperative activity. Each type of song requires a group of people to sing it, and if there is a solo it is sung over a chorus, and the solo is passed around from one individual to another. This is similar to the Mbuti rejection of individual authority and their concern for dispersing leadership as widely as possible. There are certain parts of certain songs that are sung by youths, hunters or elders, strictly according to age, and song form thus also reinforces Mbuti concern for the age differential as an important element of their social structure. The songs are most frequently in round, or canon, form, and the hunting songs, in order to heighten the need for the closest possible cooperation (the same need that is demanded by the hunt itself), are sometimes sung in *hoquet*.[1]

There are certain similarities between the hunting songs and the *molimo* songs, but this is an area that requires a great deal more care-

[1] This is a technique in which each note of the melodic line is taken by a single individual who sings that note alone, at the correct moment. The melodic line is thus literally divided among the participants (sometimes singing in groups of two or three), and the melody can only be reconstituted and heard by the cooperation of all. The complications are heightened by the use of canon, and by the use of a harmonic pattern which is also sung in hoquet, and proceeds clockwise as the melodic line proceeds, as always, counterclockwise.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

765 534 798 It is noteworthy, however, that the trumpet is not considered as sacred in itself, hidden though it may be. There was one instance when a trumpet was stolen by a member of a different family and a different band, simply because it had such a good "voice" and could sing so well. Whatever power it possesses it is believed to possess through the quality of its "voice." The fact that it can be stolen or lost (they sometimes get washed away in the floods that follow a particularly torrential downpour), without causing any ritual crisis, is in keeping with the lack of concern for inheritance of the trumpet. It is said by youths that anyone who wants to make one can have it, but that if they do not want to be bothered they need not, for "the *molimo* is a lot of work." Elders, however, say clearly that there used [43] to be one for each family, and by family they plainly defined a minimal lineage, all male members descended from a single living grandfather or from the same father, living or dead.

765 534 [511] [194] The fact that they also say that the *molimo* used to be the concern of the band only, perhaps indicates an earlier but now less pronounced emphasis on the principle of patrilineal descent; be that as it may, a noted feature of *molimo* festivals today is their utterly nonlineal nature (Tables 9 and 10).[1] With reference to the greater *molimo* held for Balekimito, there were at one time three *molimo* trumpets in action, only one of which belonged to a member of Balekimito's lineage, the second belonging to her son, the third to Kokoyo, whose wife's stepmother's brother was married to a woman of the same clan as Balekimito—a rather distant claim to lineage—but Kokoyo and Ekianga brought out their *molimo* trumpets because their *soko* wanted it. [621] Thus, by this means they emphasized the importance not of lineage membership but of membership of the band, and the *molimo*, as of old, was at least a band festival, if not a lineage festival.

765 621 771 778 181 182 A more systematic analysis in the next chapter shows the importance of the *molimo* festival as an integrating factor in Mbuti life, and indeed the importance of their whole religious system, based as it is upon a belief in the benevolence of a forest spirit or power. It can, for the moment, be seen clearly enough that it expresses among other things the latent antagonisms that exist between the sexes, because of the same lack of clear, formal sex delineations that characterize the *molimo* itself. It also unites the band (regardless of kinship considerations) in a common expression of the dependence of the Mbuti upon the forest, not only as an economic entity but also as a spiritual entity, a spiritual power that looks after their needs but which is also able to inflict hardship and punishment. The *molimo* heightens

[1] [see page 331 -- Analyst]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

965
621
771
778
181 •
182

the practical economic dependency of the Mbuti upon the forest, which is felt and acknowledged, by forcing an acknowledgment of the most basic dependency of all, that of life and death. The association with the festival of all the basic elements—fire, water, air and earth—and the central importance of food and sex, all combine to create a highly direct, personal and intimate relationship between the Mbuti and the forest, while at the same time binding them together as a band, the one individual dependent upon the next.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

elsewhere. If this is taken to indicate a lack of concern not only for kinship but also for social stability, it can also be regarded, precisely because of the freedom it allows, as a further mechanism by which the constant flux so characteristic of the band is maintained. That this flux itself has a function will be seen in the final chapter, when we deal again with the Mbuti/Villager relationship.

The different functions of each age level have been described (pp. 110, 111, 112 *seq.*), and the organizational value of making the horizontal distinction in the composite band is self-evident. Each age level is cooperative in activity, certain activities (such as the hunt) calling for cooperation between two or three age levels still preserving the distinction by allocating different roles to each. Interpersonal relations are determined primarily by age level, and authority has also been seen to be diffused through the different levels.

The transition from childhood to youth is marked for boys and girls alike by participation in the *elima*. Adulthood is conveyed by the act of marriage, which carries with it the right to own a net. The rare bachelor who proves himself as a great hunter and still does not marry may, by combined virtue of his age and his skill, own a net, but the accepted qualification is that of marriage, emphasizing another major Mbuti concern, that of procreation.

Transition from adulthood to elderhood is less clear-cut and more filled with tension, for though an elder enjoys many privileges and has, set aside for him as such, certain vital roles in the social organization, he misses the excitement of the hunt, the pride and satisfaction of rearing a family, and he certainly recognizes that this is the final transition.

The nonlineal (or cognatic) band, then, divided horizontally into age levels rather than vertically into lineages, effects an absolute unity throughout each level, whereas it would otherwise be divided into as many sections as there were lineages. Its persistence and continuity are seen in terms of territory. There may well be a tendency for certain lineages to remain within the same territory for successive generations, but such association is incidental rather than structurally determined. The demography and internal organization, while allowing for marriage within the band, make it essential for much marriage exchange to take place between different and preferably not adjacent bands. Since the residence of the newlywed couple is determined by immediate economic considerations, such as the relative size and composition of the two bands, territory is obviously not an individual

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

value (though an individual generally knows and therefore feels at home in one territory more than in others) so much as a group value. The stated concern of the Mbuti is not to perpetuate lineage but to perpetuate the band, and bands are not only defined but named by territory. Individual camps are given specific names according to their locality. *Apa toenghe* is the camp under the *toenghe* trees; *apa* Lelo is the camp by the Lelo River, and so forth. It is significant that when referring to another band it is generally referred to by its current camp name, or the last camp name known, rather than by the more general name by which its whole hunting territory is known. This implies a recognition of the changeability of the composition of the band, and an emphasis on what the band is at any given moment, defined by the particular part of its territory it is hunting at the moment.

Practical considerations of territory are that birth in a territory conveys the right to hunt with that band throughout life, and it generally conveys a sentimental attachment to the territory that may well act as a stabilizing factor. Cognatic or affinal relationships may be utilized to acquire the right to hunt in other territories, but one then becomes a member, if temporary, of the band in which one is hunting.[6] But it is when one widens the concept of territory, so that it implies more than a mere area defined by boundaries, that the notion acquires its most fundamental importance. As a definable area it is of economic and political significance in providing the framework within which hunting by different bands can take place without danger of shortage or need for conflict; it is also of social significance in providing a symbol of band unity, and the promise of continuity. But the term used by the Mbuti for territory is the same word used for forest, *nduru*. Regarded in this light, territory assumes vastly added significance.

When an Mbuti says "This is our forest" (*"Nde nduru ndaru"*), he may be defining the territory of the band in which he is a current member, or he may be defining the Mbuti as against the villagers. Alternatively, if in the honey season among the net-hunters, he may be defining the territory in which his particular subsection of the band

[6] This again is an example of different degrees of kin relationship being recognized but not made explicit, because explicit recognition would alter the distance between the individuals and so disturb the *ajwa'i* relationship. Once in the new camp, the visitor is assimilated into the age-level system of that band regardless of the nature of his kin relationships. In giving his reasons for making the visit, either to his own band or to the band he is visiting, an Mbuti will not spell out the relationship but will most likely use the personal name, coupled perhaps with the appropriate generational term. The term alone would plainly not indicate clearly enough whom he was going to visit.

2: Turnbull E-6 (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

sanctions, does not hold good for Mbuti society, where the three principles are inextricably fused. One might be able to talk of law, even if law implies sanction by force, for the Mbuti believe that the forest has such power and force and will use it. Indeed, in their experience it does, for transgression is met with the force of *akumi*, which kills. This is thought of as a very direct and practical response on the part of the forest as the law. On the other hand, public opinion can hardly be said to exist, for there is no public spokesman, and every opinion on behavior is expressed in terms of pleasing or displeasing the forest. Such public action as may be taken—ridicule or ostracism—is taken in the name of the forest. Exile is literally being sent to the forest to meet it directly. Religious sanctions are not differentiated from any others; the threat is the same—noise and displeasure.

Ultimately, then, in our consideration of territory, despite the obvious practical values involved and a certain extent of ecological determination of behavior patterns, the territory as a principle of organization must be regarded as a religious principle. Indeed, life itself, for the Mbuti, can almost be regarded as a ritual designed to please the forest and secure *ekimi*. There is, as noted, an almost total absence of magic, and the only ritual that can be truly considered as such, and is not otherwise a necessary daily activity, is song. We have seen that song is designed specifically to rejoice the forest, and to draw its attention to its children, but beyond this and its reinforcement, through musical technique, of the values of age and cooperation, there is nothing particularly remarkable about it as a social institution.

It is only when we come to death that there is a marked departure from the normal tenor of life, and a ritual, the *molimo*, that might be regarded as a ritual in the Durkheimean sense of recreating society and reaffirming the social sentiment. While any interpretation of religious ritual of this kind is highly questionable, the attempt has to be made.

Leaving aside the "legal" aspect of the *molimo* when it appears in the early hours of the morning to wreak havoc in the camp, there are few rituals that could be more explicitly concerned with the "recreation of society" in the most literal sense. Death is the most final and inescapable of all crises, and for it there is no remedy. But it threatens more than the life of the individual; it threatens the continuity of the band, and so threatens the ritual of life by which the forest is pleased. Death itself is recognized as deriving from the forest, so is accepted

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

the camp is filled with *ekimi*—not in search of *ekimi*, but in the hopes of doing as the hunters do, killing noise with more noise.

5. SONG brings us to the crux of the opposition between Mbuti and villagers, for all song in villages is by definition "empty," even if sung by Mbuti, and even if, as is rarely the case, the song is strictly Mbuti in origin. That is, while in the village the Mbuti no longer have the ultimate safeguard of being able to "rejoice the forest" through song. Even if they tried, it would be *bald*. Song being directly associated with *ekimi*, it follows, and the Mbuti affirm, that there can be no *ekimi*, or "quiet," in the village. *Ekimi*, as stated, is the ultimate goal of the Mbuti, and it is only *ekimi* that can please the forest. Visiting the village, then, would be a treacherous act beyond reconciliation under Mbuti values if it were not for the Mbuti attitude to such visits as being a form of hunt, for hunting is pleasing to the forest, and hunting is also associated with noise and danger, *ekimi* and *molo*. The rationalization may seem a feeble one, but to the Mbuti it is adequate and convenient.

Thus while the more formal institutions of the band, age levels and territorial affiliation, work internally to achieve stability and externally to directly counteract village attempts to subordinate the Mbuti, so do forest values directly counter village values, maintaining the complete separation of the two peoples. The economic exchange that takes place, while undeniably mutually convenient, may also be in part a mere recognition of territorial propinquity and of mutual opposition, a mechanism for avoiding open hostility, which would otherwise be the only possible relationship.

The strongly forest-oriented value system of the Mbuti, while operating toward the maintenance of internal order, completely counters the attempts of the villagers to assert their dominance by supernatural sanctions based on village values. But the answer to the question as to why the Mbuti go to the extreme of allowing themselves to be circumcised and initiated by the villagers may be more than that offered by the Mbuti hunting metaphor.

The metaphor recalls the technique of a hunter in taking on the appearance (and smell) of his quarry, of rubbing himself with a paste made of the heart and brains and eyes of the animal so that he can feel and think and see like his quarry. It is not a technique widely practiced, though it is practiced by elephant hunters, and by some archers, and by elders who are out hunting on their own. It is more

2: Turnbull E-S (1951-1958) 1961 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

widely practiced in the mimetic hunting dances, by which it may be supposed that the dancer is trying, magically, to influence the action and movement of the game. In this light the Mbuti acceptance of the *nkumbi* seems more plausible, as a "magical" means of gaining power over the villagers. It is not entirely unlike the situation described by Beattie (1960, p. 78) for Nyoro reactions to foreign powers such as Europeans, Polish expatriates, and airplanes. The Nyoro attempt was to gain some control over the situation by becoming possessed by the spirits of these foreign powers.

There may also be a certain amount of seepage of village beliefs into the Mbuti subconscious, despite the formidable structural opposition they have raised to all such influences. There is certainly cause to think that the village beliefs of witchcraft and sorcery, confused as they are by the Mbuti, nonetheless have for them a certain sinister ring of conviction.*

It is perhaps for that reason that the only plainly discernible symbolism evident in Mbuti ritual is concerned with life. Of all the oppositions between the forest and the village, such as abundance/hunger, unity/disunity, moral/immoral, equal/unequal, cool/hot, song/silence, quiet/noise, the most significant are undoubtedly the last two, for silence and noise are associated ultimately with death. If the Mbuti suspect there are, in the village, supernatural powers with which they should come to terms, it is for purposes of defense. And they see their major defense in the power of their own supernatural, the forest.

Their desire is to counteract the forces of hunger, disunity, immorality, inequality, heat, silence and noise, forces that amount to death for the Mbuti. Their focus of attention is on the preservation and continuation of life. The relatively simple ritual, if it can truly be called that, of the *molimo* festival is supercharged with an emotional concern, a burning desire, for life. As might be expected, it reinforces those aspects of Mbuti society that require constant attention: age divisions are closely symbolized in the three fires for the three upper age groups; the value of sharing (on nonlineal grounds!) is emphasized in the technical division of the songs, again bringing in division along age lines and demanding close cooperation; the reluctance to share is symbolized at the same time as the friction between youths

* Again, a linguistic study might help greatly, not only through separating institutions and concepts that derive from different tribes, but in revealing the location of hidden areas of forest/village opposition. Unfortunately we still lack any published studies of the Ngwaka, Efifi and Efe, let alone of the divers Mbuti groups.

2: Turnbull E-S (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

and fathers when youths go around trying to snare food from each hut (the women ultimately letting them have it, often ostentatiously). The opposition of adjacent age levels, and particularly the hostility between sons and fathers, is plainly manifest in the morning rampages of the *molimo* trumpet. The forest itself is symbolized by the leaves that conceal the trumpet (itself the symbol of the life-giving organ), and *ekimi* is the avowed objective sought through song. *Akawi*, its antithesis, is symbolized again in the morning rampage, frequently a physical battle between older and younger youths (dividing brothers) and between youths and hunters, and always a wordy battle, with the hunters winning if for no other reason than that there is a limit to the energy even of Mbuti youths.

Thus the *molimo* admirably reinforces social values and allows for the harmless expression of hostility in areas of conflict. The only symbolic representation of sexual conflict is *ekokomea*, and of course the fire dance. But here the symbolism runs deeper, and concerns the ultimate end, for just as *akawi* is associated with death, so is *ekimi* associated with life. The fire is not as realistically symbolic as the trumpet, though it is undoubtedly as feminine as the trumpet is masculine. But it is impossible not to be reminded of other instances of the use of fire and sex symbolism.[10]

And perhaps we should see this concern with life not only in terms of the threat of death from the village. Death is a threat to all societies, and for the Mbuti it is probably the one imperfection in an otherwise perfect life; that is to say, it is the one thing for which they have no certain answer, and to a practical people such as the Mbuti uncertainty is imperfection.

Ultimately the efforts of the Mbuti, if not of their system, are directed to keeping the villagers physically out of the forest, an effort that is successful largely because the villagers are only too thankful not to have to go into the forest. But just the fact that one villager can set up a fishing camp in mid-forest and be visited by other villagers, or that a chief can send his representative to a hunting camp to demand (but not necessarily obtain) meat, means that even the forest

[10] For instance, Audrey Richards (1956) writes of the Bemba that access to the ancestral spirits is to be had through the correct handling of fire and sex, and stresses (*ibid.*, p. 30, *seq.*) the ritual association of sex, blood and fire as the *idée maîtresse* behind most of the ritual behavior of the Bemba. Hocart would certainly have seen the *molimo*, and the "baptism of fire" (when Mokè passes his hands through the flames and rubs them over his face, then gently touches the hands of all those around), as a request "for the gift of undying life" (Hocart, 1952, p. 47).

B: Turnbull B-5 (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa PO1

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ing the Mbuti, are not only trying to subject the Mbuti to the authority of village supernatural sanctions but are also trying to assimilate from the Mbuti some of the spiritual power they believe to reside in the forest.

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The ultimate nature of the relationship between the two people cannot be determined until further studies have been made of similar situations from both the Mbuti point of view and, a major need at the moment, from the village point of view. For now, it seems sufficiently clear that the general nature of the relationship is one of opposition, and that Mbuti society, in response to the demands of the situation or by fortuitous chance, meets it with an organization based upon the very antithesis of village organization. Against political centralization it offers complete decentralization and diffusion of authority. Against a sedentary, patrilineal, patrilocal village it matches the nomadic, nonlineal, territorial band. The vertical village kinship system is countered by a horizontal age-level system. Village values are directly opposed by forest values. And within itself Mbuti society uses these same principles, in a state of almost perpetual flux, to maintain a cohesion fully as powerful as that found among the villagers. Instead of looking to the more conventional structural principles for the source of unity of Mbuti society, we have had to look rather to values, and it is in terms of values that the over-all society, of Mbuti and villagers, has its ultimate being and significance.

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St Turnbull E-5 (1951-1964) 1961 PO4 Pygmies PO4
bMbuti

182 the forest for many thousands of years. It is their world, and in re-
turn for their affection and trust it supplies them with all their needs.
182 They do not have to cut the forest down to build plantations, for
824 they know how to hunt the game of the region and gather the wild
825 fruits that grow in abundance there, though hidden to outsiders. They
know how to distinguish the innocent-looking *tsaba* vine from the
many others it resembles so closely, and they know how to follow
it until it leads them to a cache of nutritious, sweet-tasting roots.
[121] They know the tiny sounds that tell where the bees have hidden their
honey; they recognize the kind of weather that brings a multitude
of different kinds of mushrooms springing to the surface; and they
know what kinds of wood and leaves often disguise this food. The
exact moment when termites swarm, at which they must be caught
to provide an important delicacy, is a mystery to any but the people
of the forest. They know the secret language that is denied all out-
siders and without which life in the forest is an impossibility.

• 181 The BaMbuti roam the forest at will, in small isolated bands or
hunting groups. They have no fear, because for them there is no
danger. For them there is little hardship, so they have no need for
[141] belief in evil spirits. For them it is a good world. The fact that they
average less than four and a half feet in height is of no concern to
them; their taller neighbors, who jeer at them for being so puny, are
as clumsy as elephants—another reason why they must always re-
main outsiders in a world where your life may depend on your ability
to run swiftly and silently. And if the Pygmies are small, they are
powerful and tough.

194 How long they have lived in the forest we do not know, though
it is a considered opinion that they are among the oldest inhabitants
of Africa. They may well be the original inhabitants of the great
tropical rain forest which stretches nearly from coast to coast. They
were certainly well established there at the very beginning of historic
times.

Jr Turnbull E-6 (1951-1958) 1983 PO4 Pygmies PO4 Ethnol

123 The Pygmies, however, did not feel bound by the custom, as it
179 was not theirs anyway, and they invited me to stay with them, know-
821 ing perfectly well that I would bring with me plenty of tobacco, palm wine, and other luxuries. I was, after all, they said, father of all the children, so I was entitled to stay. The Negroes protested, but there was nothing they could do. On the one hand they felt that I would be punished for my offense by their supernatural sanctions; on the other they themselves hoped to profit by my presence. At least I could be expected to share in the expenses, which otherwise they would have to bear, of initiating the eight Pygmy boys.

And so I entered the camp and saw the initiation through from beginning to end. It was not a particularly comfortable time, as we got very little sleep. The Pygmy fathers were not in the least interested in staying awake simply to keep their children awake and teach them nonsensical songs, so the Negroes used to make periodic raids during the night, shouting and yelling and lashing out with whips made of thorny branches, to wake everyone up. Besides that,
152 the camp was not very well built and the heavy rains used to soak the ground we slept on; only the boys, sleeping on their rough bed made of split logs, were dry. In the end we all used to climb up there and sit—there was not room for everyone to lie down—cold and miserable, waiting for the dawn to bring another daily round of exhausting singing and dancing.

123 But at the end of it all I knew something about the Pygmies, and they knew something about me, and a bond had been made between us by all the discomforts we had shared together as well as by all the fun. And when the initiation was over and we were off in the forest I learned still more. It was then that I knew for sure that much of what had been written about the Pygmies to date gave just about as false a picture as did the thirteenth-century cartographer who
• 181 painted them as one-legged troglodytes. In the village, or in the
191 presence of even a single Negro or European, the Pygmies behave

St Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

in one way. They are submissive, almost servile, and appear to have no culture of their own. But at night in the initiation camp when the last Negro had left, or off in the forest, those same Pygmies were different people. They cast off one way of life and took on another, and from the little I saw of their forest life it was as full and satisfactory as village life seemed empty and meaningless.

The Pygmies are no more perfect than any other people, and life, though kind to them, is not without hardships. But there was something about the relationship between these simple, unaffected people and their forest home that was captivating. And when the time came that I had to leave, even though we were camped back near the village, the Pygmies gathered around their fire on the eve of my departure and sang their forest songs for me; and for the first time I heard the voice of the molimo. Then I was sure that I could never rest until I had come out again, free of any obligations to stay in the village, free of any limitations of time, free simply to live and roam the forest with the BaMbuti, its people; and free to let them teach me in their own time what it was that made their life so different from that of other people.

The evening before I left, before the singing started, three of the great hunters took me off into the forest. They said they wanted to be sure that I would come back again, so they thought they would make me "of the forest." There was Njobo, the killer of elephants; his close friend and distant relative, Kolongo; and Moke, an elderly Pygmy who never raised his voice, and to whom everyone listened with respect. Kolongo held my head and Njobo casually took a rusty arrow blade and cut tiny but deep vertical slits in the center of my forehead and above each eye. He then gauged out a little flesh from each slit and asked Kolongo for the medicine to put in. But Kolongo had forgotten to bring it, so while I sat on a log, not feeling very bright, Kolongo ambled off to get the medicine, and Moke wandered around cheerfully humming to himself, looking for something to eat.

3: Turnbull E-S (1951-1958) 1962 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa PO1

a tangle of fallen trees and ever-spreading vines and creepers. Here and there where the *fito*—the sapling used by villagers for building their houses—had once grown, the tangle was even worse. Once the forest is cut it grows up again, not as the mighty primeval forest it was, but as a jungle of secondary vegetation that in places is almost impenetrable. We went in single file, for the most part following a path; when we left it the youths in front flashed their hatchets above their heads, slashing away overhanging branches and vines without even slowing up, to make it easier for us to follow. But where they cut they left sharp jagged ends sticking out at just about eye-level for me. When newly cut these dangerous points are plainly visible and easy to avoid, but when they become old and dirty they are a real menace.

After about half an hour we reached the place where the more ambitious Pygmies had tried to make a plantation; this was the farthest point from the new village of Epulu that the Negroes had reached when searching for the wood to build their houses. Beyond this they did not care to venture, except for an occasional one such as Kaweki, who made his living by trapping fish in the forest streams, and those who came to help him or to carry his fish to the market. Beyond this point, in Negro eyes, the forest was evil—full of animals, malevolent spirits, and Pygmies.

But for the people of the forest the world began at this point. There was a stream nearby, just beyond the "plantation," near a site where I had recorded the forest songs of these same Pygmies • three years earlier. In this stream, for no obvious reason, each of the five youths washed carefully, as though literally ridding their very feet of the dust of the village. Then they splashed through the cool, clear water and set off again with even greater vigor than before,

• Folkways Records: FE 4457, Pygmies of the Ituri Forest
FE 4458, Music of the Ituri Forest

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

singing snatches of songs and shouting back and forth to one another about all the animals they were going to kill and eat.

Occasionally we heard an echo of our own voices coming back from the depths of the forest. Then we stopped, and one by one the young men shouted bold phrases to imaginary maidens, holding their noses and mouths, ready to stifle the shriek of laughter that would come when the same rude challenge was shouted back at them. They clapped one another on the back and held onto one another for support as they laughed, inventing all sorts of things they would do and say to any girl who answered them in such a way. The Pygmy is not in the least self-conscious about showing his emotions; he likes to laugh until tears come to his eyes and he is too weak to stand. He then sits down or lies on the ground and laughs still louder.

As we went on the forest became more spacious, and it seemed lighter, although the trees still met high overhead and shut out all direct sunlight. There was no need to worry about overhanging branches now, for here the forest was virgin, untouched by the sacrilegious hand of the village cultivator, and clear of heavy undergrowth. The ground was soft underfoot, carpeted with leaves that sometimes concealed a projecting root. But the pygmies knew where every obstacle was, even though they could not see it, and they picked up their feet to avoid tripping.

On all sides we could see for twenty or thirty yards. The giant trunks of the old trees were surrounded by slender, branchless saplings, all so far apart that we could wander off the path freely at almost any point. Here and there the main path was crossed by a smaller path made by some animal, and Kenge frequently turned off and followed the animal trail, beckoning me to follow. A few minutes later he would stop and sit down on his bundle, and then when the rest appeared along the main path he would jump to his feet and make fun of them for "walking like the BaNgwana." The

3: Turnbull E-5 (1961-1968) 1982 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

But, most important, he told me, or rather showed me, how the Pygmies believe in the goodness of the forest.

"The forest is a father and mother to us," he said, "and like a father or mother it gives us everything we need—food, clothing, shelter, warmth . . . and affection. Normally everything goes well, because the forest is good to its children, but when things go wrong there must be a reason."

I wondered what he would say now, because I knew that the village people, in times of crisis, believe that they have been cursed either by some evil spirit or by a witch or sorcerer. But not the Pygmies; their logic is simpler and their faith stronger, because their world is kinder.

Moke showed me this when he said, "Normally everything goes well in our world. But at night when we are sleeping, sometimes things go wrong, because we are not awake to stop them from going wrong. Army ants invade the camp; leopards may come in and steal a hunting dog or even a child. If we were awake these things would not happen. So when something big goes wrong, like illness or bad hunting or death, it must be because the forest is sleeping and not looking after its children. So what do we do? We wake it up. We wake it up by singing to it, and we do this because we want it to awaken happy. Then everything will be well and good again. So when our world is going well then also we sing to the forest because we want it to share our happiness."

All this I had heard before, but I had not realized quite so clearly that this was what the molimo was all about. It was as though the nightly chorus were an intimate communion between a people and their god, the forest. Moke even talked about this, but when he did so he stopped working on his bow and turned his wrinkled old face to stare at me with his deep, brown, smiling eyes. He told me how all Pygmies have different names for their god, but how they all know that it is really the same one. Just what it is, of course, they don't know, and that is why the name really does not matter very

[i.e. Moke - molimo]

St Turnbull E-6 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4 Mbuti

224 156 [below] 681 below Cephu had been firmly put in his place, and it was unlikely he would do the same thing again in a hurry.

• 181 This was typical of all Pygmy life, on the surface at least. There was a confusing, seductive informality about everything they did. [197] Whether it was a birth, a wedding, or a funeral, in a Pygmy hunting camp or in a Negro village, there was always an unexpectedly casual, [821] almost carefree attitude. There was, for instance, little apparent specialization; everyone took part in everything. Children had little or [858] no voice in adult affairs, but the only adult activities from which they seemed to be rigidly excluded were certain songs, and of course the [462] molimo. Between men and women there was also a certain degree of specialization, but little that could be called exclusive.

621 627 There were no chiefs, no formal councils. In each aspect of Pygmy life there might be one or two men or women who were more prominent than others, but usually for good practical reasons. This showed [69] up most clearly of all in the settling of disputes. There was no judge, no jury, no court. The Negro tribes all around had their tribunals, but not the Pygmies. Each dispute was settled as it arose, according to its nature.

627 681 Roughly, there were four ways of punishing offenses, each operating as an efficient deterrent but without necessitating any system of outright punishment. In a small and co-operative group no individual would want the job either of passing judgment or of administering punishment, so like everything else in Pygmy life the maintenance of law was a co-operative affair. Certain offenses, rarely committed, were considered so terrible that they would of themselves bring some form of supernatural retribution. Others became the affair of the molimo, which in its morning rampages showed public disapproval by attacking the hut of the culprit, possibly the culprit himself. Both these types of crime were extremely rare. The more serious of the [685] other crimes, such as theft, were dealt with by a sound thrashing which was administered co-operatively by all who felt inclined to

Jr Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1963 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

935 684 happened. All the youths told me not to worry about Kelemoke, that they were secretly bringing him food in the forest, he was not far away.

935 684 626 Three days later, when the hunt returned in the late afternoon, Kelemoke came wandering idly into the camp behind them, as though he too had been hunting. He looked around cautiously, but nobody said a word or even looked at him. If they ignored him, at least they did not curse him. He came over to the bachelor's fire and sat down. For several minutes the conversation continued as though he were not there. I saw his face twitching, but he was too proud to speak first. Then a small child was sent over by her mother with a bowl of food, which she put in Kelemoke's hands and gave him a shy, friendly smile.

[534] Kelemoke never flirted with his cousin again, and now, five years later, he is happily married and has two fine children. He does not have leprosy, and he is one of the best liked and most respected of the hunters.

626 I have never heard of anyone being completely ostracized, but the threat is always there, and is usually sufficient to insure good behavior. The two attitudes which disturb the Pygmy most are contempt and ridicule. Contempt is most effectively shown by ignoring someone, even if he comes and sits at the same fire. But it is difficult to maintain for long because hunters cannot afford to ignore a fellow hunter. So ostracism of this kind is infrequent and does not last. Almost as effective, and of much longer duration, is ridicule. The [157] BaMbuti are good-natured people with an irresistible sense of humor; [181] they are always making jokes about one another, even about themselves, but their humor can be turned into an instrument of punishment when they choose. [522]

593 578 Such a case was a great fight between the same two brothers who had fallen out over Kelemoke's misdemeanors, Aberi and Masalito.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

At this, old Sau, who had been sitting on the ground throughout, with Kamaikan's baby on her lap, handed the baby to her weeping daughter-in-law and slowly got to her feet. Her son and Ekianga were now both armed with stout sticks, about four inches thick and three feet long, and they were lashing out with no reservations. Sau hobbled up to them and calmly pushed her way between; then she turned and put her head against Ekianga's stomach and her backside against her son's legs, and forced them apart. They continued trying to fight each other around the old lady, reaching out far so as not to hit her, but it was just too difficult. Ekianga was the first to throw away his weapon, which he did over Sau's head, with all his might. But Amaboru ducked and it missed him. Amaboru then threw his club on the ground and led his mother back to his hut. His wife meanwhile had been joined by Kamaikan, and they both were playing happily with the baby.

This incident illustrates one of the most remarkable features of Pygmy life—the way everything settles itself with apparent lack of organization. Co-operation is the key to Pygmy society; you can expect it and you can demand it, and you have to give it. If your wife nags you at night so that you cannot sleep, you merely have to raise your voice and call on your friends and relatives to help you. Your wife will do the same, so whether you like it or not the whole camp becomes involved. At this point someone—very often an older person with too many relatives and friends to be accused of being partisan—steps in with the familiar remark that everyone is making too much noise, or else diverts the issue onto a totally different track so that people forget the origin of the argument and give it up.

Issues other than disputes are settled the same way, without leadership appearing from any particular individual. If it is a matter involving the hunt, every adult male discusses it until there is agreement.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The women can throw in their opinions, particularly if they know that the area the men have selected is barren of vegetable foods. But the men usually know this anyway.

If the question is one of marriage, and a father announces that he does not like the girl his son has chosen, his son can call on all his friends to help him. If he is strong and holds out, the whole group will be assembled to discuss the case. If they agree with the father, then either the boy has to give up his talk of matrimony or else make up his mind to marry the girl anyway. In the latter case he would probably go and live with her hunting group. But it is seldom that things come to such a pass.

In fact, Pygmies dislike and avoid personal authority, though they are by no means devoid of a sense of responsibility. It is rather that they think of responsibility as communal. If you ask a father, or a husband, why he allows his son to flirt with a married girl, or his wife to flirt with other men, he will answer, "It is not my affair," and he is right. It is *their* affair, and the affair of the other men and women, and of their brothers and sisters. He will try to settle it himself, either by argument or by a good beating, but if this fails he brings everyone else into the dispute so that he is absolved of personal responsibility.

If you ask a Pygmy why his people have no chiefs, no lawgivers, no councils, or no leaders, he will answer with misleading simplicity, "Because we are the people of the forest." The forest, the great provider, is the one standard by which all deeds and thoughts are judged; it is the chief, the lawgiver, the leader, and the final arbitrator.

Tr Turnbull B-S (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

7

The Play World of the BaMbuti

181 IN THE FOREST life appears to be free and easy, happy-go-lucky, with a certain amount of perpetual disorder as a result. But in fact, beneath all that there *is* order and reason; reaching everywhere is the firm, controlling hand of the forest itself.

861 561 601 If individual responsibility and authority are shunned and dispersed in other aspects of Pygmy life, as in the maintenance of law and order, a similar pattern appears in the upbringing of children. It is no accident that a child calls everyone in the same age group as his parents "father" or "mother"; those still older are called "grandparent." Those of the same age as himself he refers to by a

In Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1961 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

spirit-animal and he was going to attack you so I drove him into the hole and I dare not leave it or he will come out and kill you! Run and get your spear and save me, your poor Pygmy!" The villager was scared out of his wits and ran away. Asofalinda promptly hid the plantains elsewhere and quickly returned to the hole.

At this point in the story, Masamba, Njobo's wife, came to help act out the rest. Asofalinda crouched at the foot of a tree, pretending that she was covering a hole in the ground, and Masamba, acting the part of the villager, crept onto the scene, carrying a spear and looking very frightened. As they acted the scene, the villager came up behind Asofalinda and asked timidly if the spirit-animal was still there. "Yes," said Asofalinda, over her shoulder. "But I have used my magic and sung it to sleep so that you will be able to kill it. But you must be very quiet and very careful. You are the only one who could do it, you are so big and strong and clever, not like we poor Pygmies."

Saying this, she slowly uncovered the hole and whispered to the villager to stoop down and peer in. Masamba then cautiously bent over and peered into the imaginary hole. "No," said Asofalinda, "you will have to look deeper. It is a big hole and the spirit-animal is right at the back. But you must be very quiet or it will wake up and kill you first." So Masamba stooped lower and Asofalinda finished the scene with no further commentary. It was hardly necessary. She crept behind Masamba and kicked her heartily in the backside and ran off laughing and clapping her hands with mirth. Even Masamba, who suffered the brunt of the joke, enjoyed it so much that the two of them re-enacted it four times that one afternoon.

In ways like this, even on a rainy day when there is no hunting or gathering to be done, a camp can be made lively and entertaining. But generally rain brings depression. People sit in their huts and peer out miserably. On the whole, however, the tenor of life is even, wet

St Turnbull R-S (1951-1960) 1962 PO4 Pygmies PO4 Ituri

512 or dry, with few real ups and downs that affect the life of the group
821 as a whole.
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224 Occasionally an elephant is killed, and that means the entire camp
361 will be abandoned at once and a new one built around the dead
529 animal, so that it can be eaten on the spot. The Pygmies point out that this is easier than bringing the elephant to the camp. It means a week of merry-making, of singing and dancing and no hunting. The only trouble is that it also means visits from the villagers. On such occasions they will pluck up their courage and venture into the forest, feeling that with such an abundance of meat the Pygmies will be in a generous frame of mind. The Pygmies try to avoid this by immediately sending meat to the village. But when villagers do come, they are generally courteously received and allowed to stay for a day or two. After that, if they are slow with gifts of rice or tobacco, the Pygmies have various ways of making them move on. The forest is the world of the Pygmy, and he is not bashful about telling a villager who overstays his welcome just what he thinks of him.

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919 I stayed in one camp which was only a few hours from the village and on the way to a Negro fishing ground. We were constantly beset by villagers passing through, and after a while the Pygmies got tired of feeding them, tired of being used as a convenient stopping
177 place. So when they were asked for food, the Pygmies would agree
525 on condition that the villagers join them in a game of *panda*. This is a gambling game in which beans are thrown on a mat, or on a flat piece of ground. Some of them are quickly scooped up by one of the two players. The other, looking to see how many are left, has to estimate at a glance how many his opponent has taken. He then tells his opponent to throw down one, two, or three beans, or to stay as he is. The count is then made—also at a glance—and if the player has an exact multiple of four he wins. But against villagers
(151) Pygmies always win. For one thing they have an uncanny sense of

St Turnbull E-6 (1951-1968) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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commercial village that was set up on the roadside, by the government, immediately after Pat's death. The main focus of the village was not, as in so many villages, in either special plantations or road work, but in the Station de Chasse. This, with its collection of live forest animals, became an attraction for wealthy tourists with time and money enough to make the trip from Stanleyville or Beni; hence the optimistic Belgian who built the motel directly opposite. A little farther up the road, away from the river, were the houses of several hundred workers. This village stretched right up to the entrance of Camp Putnam, and beyond was the Hotel de Bière and a line of a half-dozen or so stores. The majority of these villagers, as in Camp Putnam, were from distant districts and from many different tribes. But here they had nobody to hold them together, as Putnam had his workers; their disputes were settled arbitrarily, according to Belgian notions of right and wrong. It was a village filled with jealousies, deep-seated grievances and smoldering hatred.

A few kilometers to each side of the Epulu River were two traditional villages. To the west was Dar es Salaam. The name was brought from the coast by the slave-traders, and its inhabitants were all descendants of the almost universally disliked BaNgwana, who had sold their souls to the traders and helped them in the capture of slaves and the theft of ivory. The headman of Dar es Salaam was a friendly rogue, Musafili. About two kilometers away from Dar es Salaam was the camp of Musafili's Pygmies. Like every other Negro he referred to "his" Pygmies as though they were chattels. Although Dar es Salaam always offered the warmest hospitality, I never felt at ease there. The heritage of a bloody and treacherous past was only barely dormant, and the BaNgwana are suspected today, as they always have been, of practicing the most dreaded forms of witchcraft and sorcery.

A little farther to the other side of the Epulu was a very different village, and one much more typical of the traditional settlement in

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impunity gives severe stomach disorder to the Pygmy, who is used to the fresh clean water of forest streams. Flies and mosquitoes carry germs unknown to him in his natural home. But above all, his entire code of behavior and thought is geared to his nomadic forest life: to bring him to a settled life in a village is to ask him overnight to abandon one way of life, a way he has lived for thousands of years, and adopt another. Where the Pygmies did make the attempt there was complete moral as well as physical disintegration. Not long ago a Belgian friend from the Congo told me that the day before he had left, on one small "model plantation" where the Pygmies were being liberated, twenty-nine had died in one day from sunstroke.

I spoke about the plan to many Pygmies, and when Kenge got back to Epulu he talked as much about it as about anything else that he had seen on his journey to the outside world. Old Moke summed up the attitude that I had found everywhere. "The forest is our home; when we leave the forest, or when the forest dies, we shall die. We are the people of the forest."

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or chirp of a cricket tells you that the forest is alive with some presence.

As I splashed my way through the last stream and climbed to the top of the rise above Apa Lelo, the sounds of the forest grew louder. This was a friendly sign, but somehow it made me feel even more lonely. Then I came down into the old camp. The huts were rotted and collapsed, the clearing overgrown. As I roamed about, tracing where huts had been and remembering who had lived there, kicking idly with my feet in the hopes of finding some familiar object, it all began to live again. I wandered down to the Lelo, as calm and placid and beautiful as ever, and I thought of the molimo. As I looked into the waters where the trumpet had once been hidden, it was as if I heard its voice in the distance, gentle but insistent.

When I had bade my farewell to that very special river and returned to the camp, I saw it as it really was in the timelessness of the forest world—the huts strong and green, the fires burning brightly, and the air heavy with the scent of cooking. Lisabeti was running about with the other children, swinging happily on her crutches. The men helped one another to examine and repair their nets, while the women cooked and gossiped. Masisi was shouting at someone, and Manyalibo was trying to pacify him in his usual gruff, good-natured way. Old Moke sat back in his chair and puffed at his pipe, gazing up at the tree tops so very high above. I heard him murmur once more, "You will see things you have never seen before. . . . You will understand why we are called People of the Forest. . . . When the Forest dies, we shall die." And for the last time I heard the chorus of that great song of praise: "If Darkness *is*, Darkness is Good."

The camp and the people disappeared, leaving only a shimmering haze over Apa Lelo, but the song remained, for the song is the soul of the people and the soul of the forest. The molimo trumpet, now